[1692] A. K 1798

LETTER

FROM

A Gentleman to his FRIEND, by way of Answer to one from Him, Shewing the Present Expedient and Easiness of Equal TAXING.

SIR,

I Receiv'd yours last Week, wherein you profess, you can by no means swallow the Course proprounded for Taxing Monies at Use; Which, you say, sounds harsh, must ever be inconvenient, and oft-times unjust, however to you seems unnecessary. This is, I take it, the Sum, or at least the Main, of what you offer, with so much Noise and Circumlocution.

You think it hardship, that Lenders at Interest should be obliged, under so great a Peril, to tax themselves: Is it then so hard, as by several of our Statutes, for receiving above the Rate therein specify'd, to incur a treble Forfeiture of the Principal Sum? Hath the like Provision against Frauds, in the Payment of other Publick Duties, (altho the Merchants hazards be so much greater than the Lenders,) ever been construed as *Summum Jus?*

For its inconvenience, whom in God's Name can it incommode, but such as do still, and, I doubt, for above forty Years past, have perfectly lurch'd both all their Honest Neighbours, and indeed the Commonwealth it self?

For its Unjustice, alas, if one of thousands, through his over-eagerness, or want of due Caution, have ever happened to pay for Interest, where he lost the Principal; yet how many more daily tax for Rents, they never hope to receive? And how shall this small Evil be put in balance with so monstrous a Grievance, as that the no-

A bler

bler half of a Nation ſhould all along be double or treble Taxed, the reſt ſtill going in a manner Scotfree?

Then as to the Non-neceſſity, This ſore inconvenience, how for God's ſake can it otherwiſe be prevented or redreſſed? Have not all fair means upon the matter been tried in vain? The tender of Oaths to Creditors in their own Caſe, what is it, what can it be, but multiplying of Frauds and Perjuries? Enabling of Borrowers to relieve themſelves by detainer, in paying their Intereſt, tho ſurely much the better and ſafer Courſe. Yet Debtors being of ſo Obnoxious to their Task-maſters in difficult Times, what hardſhips doth it put upon them; and how lamely hath it anſwered our Wiſhes? Alas, What errand Cavils are theſe? Were it not better in few words to have ſaid, You cannot fancy the thing, 'Tis not for your turn, Prethee talk of ſomewhat elſe?

You wiſh, We might have a Regiſter: As if we did not all wiſh for many things; but are we therefore the nearer having them? Yet did you believe, it would come at your call, you would not, I doubt, cry for it half ſo loud; As who can but gheſs, from your ſtrange Averſion to ſo juſt a Propoſal, and withal ſo like your own? For what indeed is this but a Regiſter, at leaſt, as to the preſent purpoſe of Taxing Mony at Intereſt? Only coming unſent for, it is, I perceive, the leſs welcom; and being with ſo much eaſe obtained, not worthy belike your acceptance.

In King *James* the Firſt's Reign, Intereſt being at Ten *per Cent.* half the Gentry thereby quite undon, and many more incumbred; I have been credibly told by Perſons lately Living, there was the like Out-cry for a Regiſter: From its Reducement, *Anno* 21 *Jacobi* to the Civil War, ſcarce a ſyllable of it: Land daily riſing in Rent, as well as Purchaſe, Eſtates ſuddenly becoming ſound, and in a manner free from all Incumbrance, except that of Portions: The Credit of honeſt Gentlemen as current as any Bills of Exchange. Intereſt had been newly regulated, in a competent meaſure to keep pace with Land and Trade, as Markets then went; Land-Taxes were not ſo much as heard or thought of: And indeed what did we then but warm our ſelves at our Neighbour's fire, who were all acting their Tragedies, whilſt we ſate as gentle Spectators? Whence I collect by the way, That if ever Uſury, *viz.* the Trade, or familiar Practice of it, were harmleſs as to the Commonwealth, (ſave in reſpect of *Lucrum ceſſans,*) It was in the firſt twelve Years of King *Charles* the Firſt his as yet unclouded Reign. Accordingly the Pulpits, which from the beginning of our Reformation had till then always ſo thundred againſt it, were the more excuſably there-

in

in for that time silent. Whether they since have so been, I could 609
wish our Reverend and Learned Divines would well advise.

After our unhappy Civil War, a great part of the Gentry paying severe Compositions for their Estates; We were all at once again over Head and Ears in Debt. Our then new Masters withal laying their whole Load on Land, it was in a trice so miserably crushed, that the best Bread-Corn, by the Relation of a Publick Intelligencer, in the Year 1652, or 1653, to my Remembrance, sold but at Sixteen-pence the Bushel, in one of our prime Markets. Whereupon all our Payments suddenly grew contingent; Our Exigences became extreme, and almost Universal, with Persons of Quality; Brokage upon the matter, as high as Interest: So during that rigorous Season, the cry for a Register was with a witness resumed: Which yet quickly sunk again, with the short respit we had from murthering Taxes, during the Protectorship, and some while after, notwithstanding our grievous Unsettlement.

Anno 1664, King *Charles* the Second's long Parliament laid one entire Tax of 2500000*l.* for our War at that time with the *Dutch*; And yet, ere that was fully levied, a concurrent one of half as much, all upon the Land: Which, like horrid Thunder-claps, again struck the current Payment of Rents, as it were stone-dead. Infinite indeed was the havock it made, with the Incumbrance it immediately caused throughout the whole Nation. Whereupon our Conjurers called, if possible, louder than ever, for a present Register: Nay the most intelligent, even Lawyers, who till then had all along disown'd and decry'd, began to lend it an Ear. This lasted some years, ebbing and flowing with the visible Occasion of it, Taxes and Exigences: Whereas since our last Peace with *Holland*, we have not heard the least noise of it, until of late. You may see by this, how this goodly Notion now comes in request again with some, who perhaps no more affect or intend, than others formerly did; only Talk with it, as a meer Amusement, to thrust out, or put by surer, or readier Proposals.

Altho you profess, it is not your own Opinion, yet you offer it as the sense of such as pass, you say, for Wise Men; That the Payment of double or treble Taxes by Borrowers *in terrorem*, a due Chastisement of their Folly, for running in debt. Indeed I have often heard the same thing urg'd in discourse, nay more than once of late met with it in print. To which I can only say, 'Tis well, you frankly disown a Charge so void of Truth, as well as Justice or Charity. But alas, how must it expose any Cause or Argument, when it hath recourse to such sorry Shifts? Are we not wont to call

it the courſeſt uſage even of Dogs, to be firſt beat till they ſtink, and then again for ſtinking? Yet how like is this Treatment of our Unhappy Gentry, firſt ruined with hard Dealings, and then upbraided with their Ruins?

I take no delight to renew the Remembrance of what I rather wiſh may for ever ſleep: But as he that hath either heard or read the melancholy Stories of our long Embroilment, will find ſmall cauſe to wonder, how ſo many Noble Families came to be ſo deep in debt; ſo whoſo reflects on our Courſes ever ſince, eſpecially thoſe of Taxing, may ſee more ground to marvel, how any ever got out, to keep a foot of his Land. What a bleſſed Cure of Improvidence then is that, which, without a Miracle, muſt ſoon undo the moſt Provident; And what traſh will oft-times even Wiſe Men rake up in aſſerting Soloeciſms!

The *Romans*, with their wonted Wiſdom, weighing, how fatal a general Incumbrance of Debt would prove in time to the Commonwealth, after all long Wars, quitted, it ſhould ſeem, old Scores, as it were, to begin the World anew. This ſingular Policy being propounded to *Julius Cæſar* in the time of his Dictatorſhip, though he did not altogether embrace it, in lieu thereof he decreed, All Creditors ſhould accept Payment in Land, valued at the rate it went for before the War. Without doubt, the like healing Expedients, ſuch as the remitting all or moſt of the Intereſt in times of Diſtraction incurred, have on like occaſions oft been elſewhere entertained, to relieve the Diſtreſſed, and therewith partly buoy up a declining State. If therefore no Lenitive hath here, in all this while been applied, but only Corroſive upon Corroſive; What wonder is it, if our Wound ſtill feſter, and without other timely Medicaments, hazard to Gangrene at laſt?

Indeed from the Civil War to this inſtant, who but the Landlords, (although by former hardſhips almoſt undon,) have in a manner borne the whole brunt? How many good Families do you and I know, that within fifty years paſt have paid in Taxes many Thouſands, and yet with the ſame time almoſt twice as much for Intereſt, whilſt they to whom it was paid went all along in effect Scotfree? How frequent hath it been our Memory, for Mortgagees to enter, and divers years together enjoy the full Profits of a fair Eſtate, without diſcounting any Publick Aſſeſſments, upon its Sale, or Redemption? But beſides all this, alas, in the long deadneſs of our Markets, how could, or yet can even our wiſeſt Landlords withſtand the common wretched Fate of Farming themſelves in adverſe times? Or how in an unhappy Juncture, (when able Tenants

with

with all their Carking and Drudging too, God knows, ſcarce comfortably ſubſiſt) could any hope to loſe ſo little as half their Rents, whilſt they continue to Farm, with abundance more, whenever they let their Lands, *viz.* in putting off Stock at laſt too cheap, which at firſt they could not for the moſt part help taking in too dear, in deadly Repairs, and the caſting in divers great Advantages, wherewith new Tenants muſt be baited to keep up their Rents? By this time, methinks, you ſhould allow ſome of our Gentry formerly might, and indeed may be ſtill incumbred, without their rank Prodigality. 611

But ſhould I admit, that divers of our Landlords have been to blame in not taking good meaſures, yet all, I fancy, never were therewith charged: And why ſhould the Innocence, were it of a few, be thus involv'd in the Guilt, although of many? Further, Is not this an Impeachment of at leaſt twenty or thirty Years ſtanding; And have not Acts of Oblivion ſince paſſed? Again, almoſt in every Family have there not ſince been Deſcents, and are the Children, perhaps unborn, to rue for the miſ-conducts of their Parents? Is Unthrift now turn'd Treaſon, to taint the Blood? After all, ſuppoſe only the preſent Gentry to be, or have been in fault, have they not as yet ſmarted for it enough? Are they and theirs for ever to Tax double? Is there no room for Pardon, if at length they ſhould turn good Husbands? Under what Rank are they then to paſs, of Aliens born, or Recuſants? Were it now propoſed, that only the Deſcendents of ſuch as for theſe forty Years paſt have paid little or nothing in all our Taxes, ſhould for the next forty Years bear our whole publick burthens, would not you think it a moſt exorbitant Doom? and yet what were it other than a lame refunding by Creditors, a poor requital to Borrowers, more tolerable, nay far more juſt than your wiſe Poſition?

You ſay, 'tis alledged by Sober Men, we ſhould not ſo much impute the fall of our Rents to late or preſent Hardſhips, as to the former wracking of them by the Landlords, not only before the Civil War, but ever ſince as far as they could: Would they be content to Let their Lands at the rate their Grandſires did, and accordingly to live, we ſhould all be ſoon agreed, *&c.* In troth a meer Scoff on the poor Landlords, to charge them thus with Wracking, who themſelves are on all hands ſo notoriouſly, ſo cruelly Wracked. Alas, how many of their Eſtates have ſunk within memory full half in half, for all their coſtly various Improvements, whilſt their appendant Charges are in many things ſenſibly multiplied, and where leaſt, *viz.* in point of Wages, more then doubled? How oft have

you

you and I heard from observing Men of the last Age, That towards the latter end of Queen *Elisabeth*'s, or at the beginning of King *James* the First's Reign, as creditable Lodgings in *London* were let for Half a Crown, as can now be got for fifteen Shillings a Week, as able Counsel at Law retained for Ten, as since for forty Shillings; as loud a Noise of Musick for a Piece, or under, as will at this time give Attendance for four or five; and in all Semblance, throughout proportionably? That in the City, though nothing near half so big, House rents were not a quarter so dear? That at the same time our Lands in the main went at the same, or rather more Rent, and much better paid? The truth whereof who can fairly doubt, comparing it with our own abundant Experience of the like nature? Now this I the rather urge, as well to stop the Mouths of your pretended Sages by convincing them, I hope, who are, and have been all along our Wrackers, as to open the Eyes of our worthy Landlords and Legislators, to look about them in time, and whilst they may, by all Prudent Arts, especially those of equal Taxing, and discountenancing Usury, put an effectual stop at least to the monstrous Growth of this Beast of Prey, this precious Tinsel Trade, I mean vulgarly, but absurdly so called, and therewith that of your unweildy City, before it swallow them up, or bring a sudden extreme Distress, as well on it self, as the Nation. Half an Eye, methinks, should see, that unless Estates in Land keep a kind of even pace with their incident Charges, so as to rise together with them, in effect they ruinously sink.

Lastly, You offer it as the Sense of most you now converse with, That Interest be rather reduced to Four, nay to Three *per Cent.* Shame on them, why did they then clamorously oppose it in a most favourable Juncture? What Fruit of it might, we not ere this have reaped? What inconveniences, and what hazards, by us since incurred, would it not in likelihood have prevented? Had not the most of our Usurers long ago turn'd Honest Landlords; and so, like good *Englishmen*, nay good Christians, paid their full *Quota's* for their Protection? What an Ease, what a Comfort would that have been to all their Neighbors, what a Blessing to the Commonwealth! What Estate almost now had been incumbred, what Land unimproved, what Farm unletten, what House unrepaired, what Complaint indeed would then have been in our Streets? How must all wholsom Trade have flourished with such a noble Encrease of all our native Commodities, as even under our sad Discouragements in many places we daily see, now serving only to cloy, nay choak our Markets, and by fomenting

our

ting our Sloath abundantly therewith aggravate our Decay? 613

Much about five and twenty Years since there came forth an excellent Treatise, Entituled, *Brief Observations on Trade and Interest of Mony*, Shewing with uncontrollable Arguments, and most pregnant Instances, how all Nations ever did, do, nay must decline or flourish, according to the due or undue rate of their Interest; That it is the very Pulse of Trade; That to frame a right Judgment how it fare or speeds with them, we need but enquire, What Use of Monies is their Current. And though divers other things, by the Judicious Author therein specified, seem likewise expedient; yet this is plainly the *Primum Mobile*, nay rather *Unicum Necessarium*, in respect of sound and wholsom Trade.

As an Answer hereunto 'twas then alledged, that the Fall of Interest is rather a Symptom or Effect, than any Cause of publick Prosperity. That under a lucky Constellation, forsooth, it will in due time fall fast enough of it self, and neither can nor need by Law be reduced, *&c.* Which, as in some sort, at the first sight, it may seem specious enough; so no doubt ere this it had with us accordingly sped, were it not for our monstrous Taxing. Alas, what Benefit could we think to reap even from the lowest rate of Interest, in a State of War, of Publick Thraldom, of general Free-quarter; Or, which is in effect tantamount, excessive and habitual Land-Taxes? But *cæteris Paribus*, the noble Maxim it self, *viz.* that of curbing Usury, remains inviolate, and firm as a Rock, Unshaken, indeed untouch'd with this shrill, yet harmless Battery. For who that is in his Wits will once assert or argue, That Honest equal Taxing is not a real Occasion, but the bear Symptom of a good Trade; that a fowl oppressive Rate long continued is not in it self a meritorious and adequate Cause of all ensuing Evils imaginable, as well on account of our Manners, as our Estates; that without a previous Redress herein, other Remedies, seem they never so proper, can succeed or operate: Or that indeed it were not Pity, such indirect Courses should ever Prosper? *Res ipsa loquitur*; It is, I must confess, past proving: For every Proof, you know, must be plainer than what it would prove, which herein nothing, I think, can pretend to be.

That *Junto*, commonly called the *Rump Parliament*, abated our Interest, but concurrently loaded our Lands with horrid Burthens, (for of this *Babel*, sole Land-Taxes, who but they then were the proper Architects, and who now grudges them that Honour?) Being once so miserable sunk, indeed almost half untenanted,

nanted, with so long a state of War, how could the Land ever recover, with so lame a Peace, as that which they vouchsafed us, and under Charges, alone sufficient to turn even a flourishing Kingdom into a meer Colony? Nay what is clearer than that, instead of their boasted Abatement, they really raised our Interest, at least as to Land? A goodly Restorative, and a rare Omen of our Freedom! For did not Debtors in general, (which were then the greater half, and far the nobler,) whilst they paid, whether eight or six *per Cnt.* to their Creditors, pay likewise for them at least two for Taxes, which in all good Conscience Lenders should themselves have paid; To the present Ruin of many, multiplying of extreme Exigences, and such an enflaming of Brokage, as is scarce ever to be forgot? How then will any pretend to marvel, that Land did not greatly rise in Rent as well as Purchase, upon such a fall of Interest?

At this time of day, methinks, it should hardly be doubted, but that the due Regulation thereof is a Sovereign Expedient of Publick Welfare, especially after signal Calamities. Indeed to what else in the last Century did our Neighbouring Kingdom of *France* owe its sudden wonderful Recovery from an Estate of Ruin, even next to Desolation, by thirty Years Civil War, during which it was a constant Tragical Theater of Foreigners as well as Natives? The Historian plainly tells us, Serres *Page* 1001. All other wholsom Provisions signified little or nothing without it. Nay more, to what else should we ascribe its present excessive Power both by Land and Sea, (notwithstanding its so Tyrannical Government of Church and State, with its frequent Broils,) the mighty Enterprises, wherewith of late it hath filled our Ears, the dreadful Alarms, it hath in our Age given, and yet continues to give this part of the World? To what, I say, shall we impute it, but their early curbing Usury, the Bane of all Commonwealths, the rank Weed, which, wheresoever it thrives or spreads, Out-grows and utterly crushes, nay starves every good Plant, as it infallibly must, neither taking any Care or Pain, nor bearing any Burthen, no, nor running in a manner any Risque. How famous is it, that Mony was there reduced to Six Pounds and a Crown *per Cent.* now near a Hundred Years since, as it were in the very Cradle of all Pretences to Merchandise in this Western World, and twenty or thirty Years, before we brought it to Eight? Whereas their haughty Rivals, either through gross Supineness, or starch'd and supercilious Bigotry, not at all allowing for the Hardness of Mens Hearts,

as

as did the great Lawgiver *Moſes*, but condemning and prohibiting, in ſtead of regulating or reſtraining a Miſchief, by long Experience in it ſelf unavoidable, ſuffer'd, or rather drove it for want of Vent, to rankle inwards, and working ſtill under-ground, undermine, as it were, the Foundations of Trade, or Publick Welfare. 615

Yet I muſt tell you, Things, however excellent in themſelves, for want of being well timed, may prove Abortive. Now the Regulation of Intereſt ſeems to be the proper Work of peaceable, as equal Taxing is of Warlike Seaſons. Suppoſe, for Arguments ſake, Our Intereſt ſhould be ſhortly brought to four, nay to three *per Cent.* Again, put the caſe, that for our inſtant Occaſions, at leaſt as heavy Taxes as theſe we now ſhrink under, ſhould withal for divers Years to come be charged either all on Land, or with a concurrent, yet unequal Poll. Would not in effect all the Monies now letten at Intereſt, tho never ſo low reduced, be ſtill continued on the ſame Securities, and even on the ſame Terms, it probably being for neither Parties Convenience, during ſuch unſettled Times, to make any Change therein? Would not the moſt of our Unhappy Farmers ſoon incur dangerous Arrears of their Rents, and abundance of them finally prove Inſolvent? Would not moſt of the Landlords be thereby driven either to ſink one half of their Livelihoods, or Farm more ruinouſly themſelves, or let their Lands to the Crows? Would not great numbers of them be forced to live upon Tick or Truſt, (which is, as you know, but a ſort of borrowing at double or treble Intereſt,) The Diſcreeter ſort take up Monies, ſome for the neceſſary ſupport of their Credits in the failure of their Revenues, Others for the due Stocking their Farms, or elſe well managing their Eſtates? And then, as to the Mony-Mongers, why ſhould we fancy, they would not Act at the rate of their Predeceſſors after the Civil War, and finding the vaſt numbers, as well as ſevere Exigencies of their Clients, make Hay in Sun-ſhine; many themſelves exacting perhaps double Uſe, by way of Gratuity: The more Scrupulous Lodging their Caſh with ſuch, as betwixt Procurement and Continuance could make further advantage of it; Whereby Retrenching of Intereſt, what would it at beſt thus ſignifie, but the deadly raiſing of Brokage?

On the other ſide, admit, the next Seſſion of Parliament ſhould impoſe a Tax, greater in it ſelf than hath been hitherto known, yet with a retroſpect of favour on ſuch as have formerly been overcharged; Or ſay, that it were only the moſt comprehenſive Rate

they could well contrive, and reaching all Liquid Rents, with a double Charge, in regard of their Immunity from heavy Repairs, Parish-Assessments, &c. withal declaring (as within our Memory did that Worthy Convention, which restored us King *Charles* the II. though succeeding Parliaments have, it should seem, all forgotten it,) That we should from thenceforth have no more sole Land-Taxes: Should this, I say, be now both done and declared, although without any mention of abating Interest, yet who can believe, but that most of our Mony-Mongers would quickly turn Purchasers, and few but our real Widows or Orphans in a short time drive that easie Trade, when it were thus become unprofitable; Whereby Land, no doubt, would rise and Mony fall of it self with a Witness? How late and loud an Instance hereof have we seen our selves, in a most perplexed time, even the last part of King *Charles* the II. and King *James* the II's whole distemper'd Reign, when, notwithstanding our State Convulsions, with a short and lame Relief from oppressive Taxes, Farms were currently letten, Rents still on the rising hand, Land advanced in the Purchase, and Use-Mony daily fell? Give me leave therefore, with my wonted freedom to tell you, I shrewdly suspect your Politick Friends, who now seem to solicit Abatement of Interest in this heat of War, as knowing too well, it would for the present signifie little, would be full out as eager for our equal Taxing in a Calm of Peace, when they neither saw nor fore-saw the least Publick Charges: And both alike in earnest.

It hath been ever with me some Question, whether Creditors, (or at the least Mortgagees,) in not fairly paying their *Quota's*, may not with reason enough be construed to incur the rigor of the Statute; Their only colourable Excuse seeming to be, that they never were actually Assessed: Otherwise a Man would think, the scope of it must needs comprehend, nay the very words reach them. For if indeed their Debtors do but pay their Taxes for them, is it not all one, as if they paid so much to themselves, and so much to their Order? However admit, that a long and general, tho erroneous Practice herein overrule, yet what a pregnant Motive is it for an immediate Enforcing, or at least Explaining the Statute on that behalf?

On the whole Matter, if we will not together admit such Inconveniencies, and run such Hazards as are hardly to be mentioned or thought of without Horror, a juster rate of Taxing, tho not to Scruples, yet at most to grains of Allowance, seems indispensibly requisite. For which, with all due Submission, it is Proposed,

That

That when the Parliament ſhall in their Wiſdom think fit to 617
bring our Intereſt of Money Lower, leſt the rate, which they ſhall judge convenient to peaceable Times, ſhould prove (as heretofore it hath often done, and even now plainly doth) for any time of War inconvenient, indeed rather Intolerable, a ſtanding Clauſe may be Inſerted, whereby Sums at Intereſt, with all other Liquid Revenues ſhall of Courſe, without any particular Charge, pay the *Quota* therein Specified, in a due proportion with our Land-Rents, to be aſcertained by the Commiſſioners, in caſe the Tax it ſelf be not a Pound-rate, which I muſt confeſs, were greatly now to be Wiſhed.

That in our future Taxes, all the Liquid-Rents be Charged to pay either the double, or at leaſt one Third part more than the Land-Rents, which are ſo ſenſibly liable to grievous endleſs Repairs, with abundance of other Charges, vaſt trouble oft-times in Managing, and by daily ſad Experience, ſevere Caſualties and Loſſes.

That hereafter no Taxes be laid upon Land, without the moſt impulſive and effectual Clauſes that can be deviſed, with the ſtricteſt Cuſtom-houſe Orders; or otherwiſe, for a Concurrent Tax on Monies at Intereſt, by way of Detainer upon Payment of the ſame, at the Rate fore-mentioned, in the caſe of Mortgages or Bonds on Record; but in Securities purely Perſonal, to pay juſt the ſame with our Land-Rents.

That Offices and Profeſſions, if not in Ordinary, to be ſure, at leaſt in Extraordinary Occaſions, be Rated alike with Liquid-Rents, as a juſt Tribute for their goodly Privileges, and in token of their more immediate Dependance upon the State.

That for a full Execution hereof, Select Commiſſioners, not only for Rank, but Worth and Zeal to the Cauſe, be in all Parts Singled out; That they take a Solemn Oath, as for the diſcharge of a Sacred Weighty Truſt; That they have allotted them ſome moderate Allowance, by way of Poundage out of the Tax, toward their convenient Charges: Which if they Faithfully perform their Duties, will be by them well deſerved, and dear enough Earned.

Were theſe, or ſome otherlike honeſt Courſes herein taken, we fairly might hope for a ſpeedy period to theſe our heavy Burthens, as alſo real Dangers; and in the mean time might be ſo far from drooping under their Weight, as we ſhould hardly feel, nay ſhould even thrive, and Dance, as it were, under this Expenſive War: Which without Cruſhing or much Imparing any good Common-wealth's

Man

Man in his Estate, would only give us a kindly vent to most of our ill Humours, sweetly compel a general Thrift, to the happy balancing of Trade, with the retrenchment of Foreign Superfluities, and insensibly perhaps introduce such Habits, as should lay the sure Foundation of a durable Wellfare: Foreign War, with any tolerable rate of Publick Charges, being not only good Exercise, but most approved Physick for any State. Indeed, scarce ever yet were Taxes, being necessarily Imposed, and equally Charged, either long or greatly felt; they Circulating ever in needful, wholsom and Domestick, not vain and Foreign Expence. Whereas, with Oppressive Rates, any little War is a kind of Malignant Fever, which if it prove not downright Mortal, is at least apt to leave the Patient Hectical. To me nothing is clearer than that our chiefest Adversaries have now little other Hope or Comfort left them, than a strong, yet I trust, a fond and wholly groundless Presumption of our persisting in this fatal Error.

After all that can herein be said, it seems to me, that *pro hâc vice*, for a main Effort, or at a dead Lift, at least for a supplemental Aid, or Publick Stock, the Legal Benevolence, founded on an appropriating Act of Parliament, contrived and well drawn for that purpose, were Incomparable. We may be secure it will break no Bone; it would clog or embase no Fund of Estate, or Price of any Native Commodity. It would affect no Market; neither yet need we greatly fear, but it would answer our Hopes: For tho such Courses are generally most Successful, when they preceed, or at least attend Acts of Royal Grace and Clemency, yet upon Accounts so Popular as ours at present: Indeed, whensoever this, or any Free Nation is satisfied, both that the Levies themselves are highly Expedient; and that the Sums thereby Raised, will all be duly employed, how can they fail of a considerable Effect?

In affording me your Sense hereof, you will much Oblige

SIR,

Your most Affectionate Humble Servant,

R. S.

FINIS.

314481